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Lucia A Keegan 11/15/2006 09:56:49 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

Cable
Text:

UNCLAS SENSITIVE PARIS 07341

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 007341

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [KPAO](#)
SUBJECT: USUNESCO - A/S POWELL MEETS DIRECTOR-GENERAL

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: During a meeting characterized as "highly positive" by the UNESCO Secretariat, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Dina Habib Powell met with UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura and raised the First Lady's Literacy conference, Powell's upcoming trip to Asia to promote higher education, the First Lady's Global Cultural Initiative and UNESCO reform and accountability. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Programs Thomas A. Farrell also

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stated that the U.S. was opposed to an international instrument on education as a public good. Matsuura remains keen to partner with the U.S. and welcomed the Assistant Secretary's announcement of the Fusion Arts program, a new ECA exchange for university students, suggesting that First Lady Laura Bush consider coming to UNESCO to launch it. He did not, however, commit to stopping an instrument on education.
END SUMMARY.

GLOBAL LITERACY CONFERENCES:

¶2. (U) The Assistant Secretary opened up the meeting by mentioning the First Lady's appreciation for Matsuura's work and then discussed upcoming plans for the first follow on conference to the First Lady's September 2006 Global Literacy Conference, which will take place in March 2007. Ambassador Oliver noted that Asia Pacific countries at UNESCO were vigorously competing against one another on where to hold the second follow on conference in their region. Matsuura, who also provided an opening address at the Fulbright new Century Scholars Closing Plenary Session held at UNESCO on October 24 (septel b) stated that he completely agreed with Mrs. Bush on the importance of literacy and regretted that the UN had not mentioned it explicitly in its Millennium Development Goals.

Reciprocal ACADEMIC EXCHANGE IN ASIA:

13. (SBU) Assistant Secretary Powell stated that she would soon co-lead a delegation to Japan, South Korea and China with U.S. Secretary for Education, Margaret Spellings and 12 U.S. University

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presidents in order to deliver a message to governments, business, the academic community and students in the three countries that the U.S. welcomes more foreign students from their countries coming to the U.S. to study at our colleges and universities. She emphasized that the U.S. wants to reach beyond elites and visit not only well-known universities but also smaller ones. She added that her office also encourages U.S. students to study abroad and learn foreign languages. She asked the Director-General for ideas on how to pursue these goals in Asia. He responded that Japan needs to do more reciprocal exchanges rather than just one-way exchanges. He urged Assistant Secretary Powell to ask the new Japanese Prime Minister to increase the flow of reciprocal exchange, perhaps connecting it with the Abe or Obuchi fellowship programs. He added that South Korea was now a prosperous enough country to also increase its reciprocal exchange flow and stated that like Japan, it might be taking in many students but sending too few abroad.

GLOBAL CULTURAL INITIATIVE:

13. (SBU) The A/S mentioned the First Lady's Global Cultural Initiative, noting Secretary Rice's personal commitment to culture as a trained concert pianist. She stated that the administration had doubled its cultural programming budget in recent years and has developed close personal relations with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington as well as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH). Ambassador Oliver noted past Mission cooperation with these entities, including a blues concert and a poetry reading with the Chairman of the NEA, Dana Gioia in 2004 and 2005. The Assistant Secretary raised the development of the "Very Special Arts Program"

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affiliated with the Kennedy Center, whose artists with disabilities perform abroad and suggested UNESCO engage with this program. She also mentioned the Fusion Arts Exchange Program, a new ECA program that she announced for the first time at UNESCO headquarters on the same day, stating that the U.S. would like to have a performance at UNESCO. (The project will bring together students from different countries with strong musical traditions, to study popular music and perform together with American students at a leading U.S. university music program.) The Director-General responded that he would like to do a cultural event with Mrs. Bush as part of a multifaceted visit, and the Assistant Secretary asked if the First Lady could launch the first Fusion Arts Exchange at UNESCO Headquarters. The Director-General stated that he would be pleased if UNESCO were associated with these new programs and welcomed any initiatives with the First Lady.

ETHICS AND REFORM:

15. (SBU) The Assistant Secretary turned to the topic of ethics, praising the Director-General for his leadership in this field. She emphasized the importance of international organizations building credibility with the U.S. Congress - indeed; she added Matsuura had built an excellent reputation in this area on Capitol Hill. The Director General stated that he would announce a UNESCO Code of Conduct in December. He stated that in cases where employee conduct was a problem, he had been able to successfully terminate the employee in every situation except for one, who, in staying on, had created enormous difficulties for her boss.

INSTRUMENT ON EDUCATION:

18. (U) Deputy Assistant Secretary registered U.S. concern over

possible instruments in the area of education as a public good. Farrell noted the existing guidelines on quality assurance of cross border education. The Director-General stated that he, personally, was against an instrument on education as a public good and noted that UNESCO had done a good job adopting the guidelines on cross border education with the Organization on Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) but stated that it was now up to member states on how to handle and implement these guidelines, and to determine if they were sufficient. (COMMENT: This reaction strongly echoes his previous comments on the cultural diversity convention, which was to state that while he personally did not feel strongly about the issue, member states were firm. END COMMENT.)

¶9. (SBU) COMMENT: The meeting between the Director-General and Assistant Secretary Powell was well received by the secretariat and opened up new possibilities for cultural cooperation. The Director-General's reaction to the point on ethics suggests that he is aware of their importance for his legacy at UNESCO. It also demonstrates his concern that there might be difficulties in more than one area of UNESCO on this point. Finally, Mission notes that the Director-General only stated his personal views on an instrument to make education a public good, not his professional view on the topic. END COMMENT.

¶10. (U) This cable was approved by Assistant Secretary Powell's office.

OLIVER